

Runnels County Pioneers Recall Indian Raids of '77

Frontier-day happenings of the Content area of northeast Runnels County are recalled in correspondence between two pioneer residents of the community, both now nearing 90 years of age.

The correspondents are J. B. Hudman, 88, now of Post, and H. S. Bright, 84, of 734 Ross Ave., Abilene. Both grew up in what became the Content community, and in recent years they have exchanged numerous letters in which they discuss early history of the area.

Bright has turned the letters he has received from Hudman over to the Hardin-Simmons University Library because of their historical content.

Hudman and Bright were school mates in the old Content school in the 1880's. Hudman moved there with his parents in 1875, and Bright moved there in 1882, when he was six years of age.

When the Hudman family moved to the area, Content hadn't been established and the specific locality was referred to as Ranger Peak because of the group of Rangers which occupied a post on the mountain there.

Indians were still plentiful, and Hudman wrote that they raided the community in 1877, stealing all of his father's livestock and causing the family to move back to Palo Pinto County to get a new start.

Homes of Logs

There were no houses made of lumber at that time. Families built their homes of logs and the buildings usually were finished off with grass-and-dirt roofs.

Hudman wrote that his uncle, John L. Chambers, helped to build the first school in the community and that Chambers later operated a blacksmith shop. Chambers ran a ranch on Jim Ned Creek about six miles northeast of Content, in Coleman County. He later moved west and helped to organize Coke County, served as county surveyor there, and then went west again to assist with the organization of



LETTERS TELL HISTORY — H. S. Bright, 734 Ross, presents letters telling of early Runnels County history to Mabel E. Willoughby, library director at Hardin-Simmons University. Bright and J. B. Hudman of Post formerly lived at Content and have recounted much of the community's early history in their correspondence.

Martin County which he served as county judge, according to the letters.

Hudman said that the Content region was heavily timbered with post oak and other large trees when he first went there.

First post office serving the area was Blue Gap, which got its service out of Buffalo Gap. The log building housing the post office, built in about 1875 or 1876, is still standing, according to Hudman.

Dan W. Hale founded Content two miles away in 1881, and the post office was moved there with Hale serving as postmaster. The post office was moved again in 1904 to Token—and service was discontinued in 1914.

The first school was a one-room log structure with dirt roof, dirt floor and split-log benches.

Founded Mineral Wells

Hudman wrote that when his father, P. W. Hudman, moved the family back to Palo Pinto County following the Indian raid, he and Dr. George Barber were instrumental in establishing the town of Mineral Wells as a health resort. A couple named Lynch had moved to the area and settled near the Hudman home. They had to haul water several miles, so

it and stood up straight, four inches of the beard trailed on the floor."

Recalls Runnels City

He recalls that A. J. Rosson was justice of the peace at Content at the time. Runnels City was then the county seat, but has ceased to exist.

The Hudmans had returned to Runnels County in 1880 after getting Mineral Wells started as a health resort, and Blue Gap later became known as Hudman Gap because of its proximity to the Hudman homeplace.

Bright, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. C. Bright, was born in Oregon but his family moved to Content in 1882. He resided there continuously until 1952 when he moved to Abilene.

Content had more citizens in 1882 than it has today, due to growth in size of farms and the decline in size of families, according to Bright.

Both Bright and Hudman have been successful amateur archaeologists and both have found and collected numerous artifacts.

Hudman was co-finder of the largest mammoth tusk ever unearthed. Found in New Mexico, it is 23 inches in diameter at the base and is 16 feet and eight inches long.

Israeli Official Arrested for Spying

JERUSALEM, Israel (AP) — A trusted Israeli Defense Department official who enjoyed the confidence of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion has been arrested and accused of spying for a foreign power.

An official announcement identified the official as Dr. Israel Beer, 49, a military writer. The foreign power was not identified.

It is understood that the Austrian-born Beer was arrested after

new start.

Homes of Logs

There were no houses made of lumber at that time. Families built their homes of logs and the buildings usually were finished off with grass-and-dirt roofs.

Hudman wrote that his uncle, John L. Chambers, helped to build the first school in the community and that Chambers later operated a blacksmith shop. Chambers ran a ranch on Jim Ned Creek about six miles north-east of Content, in Coleman County. He later moved west and helped to organize Coke County, served as county surveyor there, and then went west again to assist with the organization of

Israeli Official Arrested for Spying

JERUSALEM, Israel (AP) — A trusted Israeli Defense Department official who enjoyed the confidence of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion has been arrested and accused of spying for a foreign power.

An official announcement identified the official as Dr. Israel Beer, 49, a military writer. The foreign power was not identified.

It is understood that the Austrian-born Beer was arrested after passing material to a foreign agent who was shadowed by Israeli security officials.

Beer reportedly admitted having worked for the foreign power for several years.

Beer is considered here a top expert on military strategy.

He reportedly helped map Israeli strategy during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 and was one of the 12 Israeli army officers personally sworn in by Ben-Gurion.

Post formerly lived at Content and have recounted much of the community's early history in their correspondence.

Martin County which he served as county judge, according to the letters.

Hudman said that the Content region was heavily timbered with post oak and other large trees when he first went there.

First post office serving the area was Blue Gap, which got its service out of Buffalo Gap. The log building housing the post office, built in about 1875 or 1876, is still standing, according to Hudman.

Dan W. Hale founded Content two miles away in 1881, and the post office was moved there with Hale serving as postmaster. The post office was moved again in 1904 to Token—and service was discontinued in 1914.

The first school was a one-room log structure with dirt roof, dirt floor and split-log benches.

Founded Mineral Wells

Hudman wrote that when his father, P. W. Hudman, moved the family back to Palo Pinto County following the Indian raid, he and Dr. George Barber were instrumental in establishing the town of Mineral Wells as a health resort. A couple named Lynch had moved to the area and settled near the Hudman home. They had to haul water several miles, so they dug a well.

The water tasted so badly that they continued to haul water, but used the well water occasionally. The Lynches had been in poor health, which caused them to move to that section. Their health began to improve, Dr. Barber attributed the improvement to the mineral water, and the senior Hudman and Barber purchased some of the Lynch land which they subdivided as the Mineral Wells town-site.

Hudman mentions numerous early settlers of the Runnels County area in his letters. Among them are Tolbert Burford, who now lives near Ovalo, Odis Burford, John Bright, George and Sam Rice, Benson and Dave Smit Hart Conger, Tom Fannin, George Stitsell, Chris Burton, Uncle Ben Hudman and others whose first names he has forgotten.

He tells of Dick Tillery, who lived at Runnels City and had what probably was the longest beard in the whole West. He kept the beard rolled up in a silk cloth, and "when he unrolled

it and stood up straight, four inches of the beard trailed on the floor."

Recalls Runnels City

He recalls that A. J. Rosson was justice of the peace at Content at the time. Runnels City was then the county seat, but has ceased to exist.

The Hudmans had returned to Runnels County in 1880 after getting Mineral Wells started as a health resort, and Blue Gap later became known as Hudman Gap because of its proximity to the Hudman homeplace.

Bright, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. C. Bright, was born in Oregon but his family moved to Content in 1882. He resided there continuously until 1952 when he moved to Abilene.

Content had more citizens in 1882 than it has today, due to growth in size of farms and the decline in size of families, according to Bright.

Both Bright and Hudman have been successful amateur archaeologists and both have found and collected numerous artifacts.

Hudman was co-finder of the largest mammoth tusk ever unearthed. Found in New Mexico, it is 23 inches in diameter at the base and is 16 feet and eight inches long, measured around the curve. The tusk now is in the New York Museum of Natural History.

Looking back at what they call "the hard-time days," Hudman and Bright in their correspondence have concluded that their generation of kids was "a tougher lot" than the present—though not necessarily better. They figure people probably were happier, too, with their home-made conveniences and no worry about time payment plans.